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# PelhamNEWS

## Young patriotism



Aaron McInerney, 4, and his dog Stasho waited for the Canada Day Parade down Haist Street in Pelham dressed in patriotic colours.

BEYRD FRANKS/POSTMEDIA NETWORK



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# Hero's welcome for rescuer

**BERND FRANKE**  
Postmedia Network

Michael White's second meeting with Paul Damude this week took place under much better circumstances than the first.

Instead of being lost, cold and on the brink of kidney failure, the 79-year-old was surrounded by loved ones in a hospital room and well on the road back to health.

White, a diabetic whose heart is regulated by a pacemaker, can thank Damude for that, and he

did just that last Friday.

In fact, the reunion with the man who found him after he had been missing for 30 hours was the highlight of White's day.

"He wasn't good until this face showed up," White's wife, Carole, said pointing over to Damude.

"As soon as he walked in, he got up and started hugging him."

Damude, who found the severely dehydrated senior last Wednesday at noon, on the fourth search of his 35-acre apple orchard in Thorold, was only too happy to bug back.

"He's family now," said Damude, who stopped by Welland hospital to check on White's condition.

"I just wanted to see if he was all right."

White was in "rough shape" when he was finally discovered about a kilometre away from his townhouse complex in Pelham after an extensive search. Clad only in his underwear and using his shorts as a pillow, White was found lying on a bank.

"He was sort of off the beaten track, but he stuck out like a sore

thumb," said Damude, who got on his ATV and searched under part of his property on a hunch.

"I did have a feeling I was going to find him."

White, who suffers from a form of dementia that affects his speech and also is hard of hearing, was unresponsive at first.

"I was yelling at him. He was very weak," Damude said.

"He was very talkative. He wanted to go on a ride on my ATV, and he wants to come to the orchard to pick apples," Damude said.

White's daughter, Michelle Moore, said Damude is a hero.

"I said to Paul 'You don't understand. You just saved a life,' she said, fighting back tears. "What he did for our family is huge."

Moore admitted the family began fearing the worst after searches of the routes White normally takes for his regular walks came up empty.

"For some reason he took a different turn," she said. "It was unusual he would

go that way."

The family all hut gave up hope at 2 a.m. Wednesday.

"We did not think he was alive," Moore said.

Niagara Regional Police, Search and Rescue Niagara were involved with the search as were Pelham volunteer firefighters and the Erie County Sheriff's office, which supplied a helicopter.

White's daughter Angela Buckley said the community also helped the family in its time of need.

"We appreciate the kindness and assistance from our friends, family, neighbours, employees of Enercare and Grimshy Power along with the community," White's daughter Angela Buckley said.

"We also want to thank the ambulance crew who kept him comfortable during his trip to the Welland hospital."

White is expected to remain in hospital until his kidney functions are fully restored.

"But he wants to go home today," Moore said, finally able to laugh.

BFranka@postmedia.com



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BERND FRANKE/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Mike White, right, the target of an extensive search after he failed to return home, received a visit from Paul Damude, the man who found him after he was missing for 30 hours.

# LOCAL NEWS

## DSBN will not change new name of Fenwick school

**WAYNE CAMPBELL**

Special to Postmedia Network

District School Board of Niagara has passed on a chance to drop a new name for Pelham's E.W. Farr Memorial School.

A recorded vote to reconsider the new monicker attracted only two supporters at the board's regular meeting last Monday night.

St. Catharines trustees Linda Crouch and Jennifer Ajandi voted for it.

That followed a presentation by Kevin Ker of Fenwick Heights who called DSBN's new name for his community's school, Wellington Heights, a poor choice built on a mistake.

He said it also honours someone with no connection to Pelham or even Canada.

The Duke of Wellington is a poor example for an inclusive attitude the board wants to promote, he said.

After the meeting, Ker said he was disappointed by the rejection. His group, however, plans to take the matter to the Ministry of Education, Ontario's ombudsman, and through MPP Tim Hudak to the Ontario legislature.

More than 40 people from Pelham backed Ker. A 750-name petition objections to the new name.

Wellington Heights was chosen by a committee of Pelham Centre and E.W. Farr staff, students, school council, school board and community members.

Continued on Page 11



Kevin Ker of Fenwick tells District School Board of Niagara trustees that Wellington Heights is a poor name change for E.W. Farr Memorial Public School.

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## GO announcement has a touch of grey


 GRANT  
LAFLECHE

**F**inally — after the business plan, and the political wrangling, and the rallies and the social media campaigns — Niagara is getting GO trains.

Well, eventually.

Ontario will go to the polls twice before the trains start running to and from Niagara Falls every morning and evening. And by the time the Niagara line is operational in 2023, local governments will have also changed members twice.

But all things being equal, the trains are coming.

Last Tuesday's announcement by Ontario's Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca left me with mixed feelings.

On the one hand, it is enormously gratifying to see Niagara finally crossing this particular political Rubicon. GO trains are not a magic bullet to cure what ails the local economy, but they do represent a key pillar to transforming a region that for too long has been cut off from the rest of Ontario.

And it will spur the rapid development of a true Niagara regional transit system that will allow local residents to move easier across all 12 municipalities.

But last Tuesday's announcement also left me frustrated. It will take until 2023 for the line to be fully operational, meaning it will do little good to our struggling region in the here and now.

No one expects a commuter service to appear magically out of the ether, but seven years is a long time to wait.

The wait seems especially long when you consider the potential to get people moving sooner than that exists.

For those who missed the announcement, Del Duca said work on Niagara GO stations in Grimsby, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls will begin next year. The Confederation GO station in Niagara Falls is expected to be operational in 2019, and trains could start arriving in Grimsby in 2021.

Two years later, the full line to Niagara Falls will be active.

The importance of this to Niagara cannot be understated. Building a commuter link to the GTA, and in particular to Hamilton, will allow Niagara residents to travel to jobs outside the region, permit local businesses to attract out-of-Niagara talent, provide



BOB TYMCZYK/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Ontario Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca was joined by St. Catharines MPP Jim Bradley at the St. Catharines train station to announce the expansion of GO train service into the Niagara Region.

students better access to Niagara's post-secondary institutions, and will likely be a boost to the local tourism sector.

Niagara Region Chairman Alan Caslin was beaming last Tuesday, proclaiming that Niagara is "back, and here to stay."

You could ask "back from where?" given that the notion that Niagara once had a golden age is a recent political myth, but never mind that. Caslin has just cause to be proud, as does his predecessor Gary Burroughs, the local mayors who worked on the GO file as well as regional staff.

Let's face it, this could have easily gone horribly wrong. Niagara has a well-earned political reputation as being a den of petty political infighting, and each month regional council finds new ways to reinforce that image.

But on the GO file, Niagara did something unprecedented: it acted as a unified region in the best interests of the people

who live here.

At any point along the way over the past few years, Niagara's reflective urge for infighting could have derailed the whole project.

But it didn't and the GO file should serve as a template for what Niagara can do politically when it isn't acting like a gaggle of yaahos.

However, the tentative timeline is somewhat troubling. If the Confederation station can be up and running by 2019, there is no reason why a version of the Niagara line cannot be running by then — perhaps with stops in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls while the Grimsby station is under construction.

Del Duca said several times the government has to hammer out a deal with CN, which owns the rail lines often occupied by freight trains. But surely a deal can be struck by 2019 to get the Niagara service

running early.

How much this will all cost is also a total mystery. Niagara Region's business plan pegged the cost between \$100 million and \$120 million.

Del Duca insisted Niagara GO is budgeted for, but he declined to say what the projected cost is, or if the \$40 million the Region has already committed will be sufficient. Costs won't be released, he said, until a deal with CN is completed.

Given that the business plan has a projected cost attached to it, surely Del Duca could tell the public if that is in the ball park.

I don't want to be a wet blanket about Niagara GO. Tuesday's announcement is a significant step forward for the region. But there remains a number of questions left unanswered by Queen's Park and I will refrain from opening up the sparkling wine until the answers become clear.

# Niagara gets GO-ahead

MARVANE FIRTH  
Postmedia Network

Year-round weekday GO rail service will reach Niagara by 2021.

Commuter service to the region is expected to begin in Grimsby and will be expanded through to St. Catharines and Niagara Falls by 2023.

The announcement was made by Ontario Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca Tuesday on a packed platform at the St. Catharines train station.

The Niagara GO rail extension, subject to a final agreement with CN Rail, will operate on 60 kilometres of track between the future Confederation station in Hamilton — for which construction begins next year and will be completed in 2019 — and Niagara Falls.

It will include construction of a new station at Casabianca Boulevard in Grimsby, as well as upgrades to existing train stations in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls.

Those retrofits will begin as soon as summer 2017, Del Duca said.

"I think it's really important for the people of this community to recognize that starting next summer they will see a physical manifestation of our commitment to deliver trains with respect to the station upgrades."

In addition to the new and upgraded rail stations, the expansion will require a number of infrastructure improvements, including 30 kilometres of new track, existing track upgrades, a new layover facility in Niagara Falls and new additions to the fleet of trains.

Metrolinx is leading talks with CN, the owners of the rail corridor between Hamilton and Niagara Falls, to determine infrastructure needs and service levels, Del Duca said.

When an agreement with CN is reached, Metrolinx will undertake planning and design work required to implement the service.

"It, as a result of this important process, work can progress faster, it will," Del Duca said.

"I want to be clear about this. The funding is there. Our government's desire is there and we will deliver on this project."

The minister declined to comment on the expansion's overall cost, citing ongoing negotiations with CN.

"We don't tend to put a dollar figure out into the public sphere until we know exactly what work is required, because we don't want to effectively prejudice any outcome of any procurement that's required," he said. "But I can confirm that all of the internal approvals that I need from the government of Ontario are in place, including financial approvals to deliver on GO train service to Niagara."

Once negotiations with CN are complete and a "better sense" of exactly what the dollar figure will be, the community will be updated, he said.

Del Duca said discussions with CN, which also include details of exact ride times and number of Niagara trains, are going "very well" with a finalized agreement expected in the near future.

Service will take place in the morning and afternoon at minimum to start.

Del Duca commended the region, and all those who worked on the Niagara file, for their "continued and resilient advocacy for making sure that we get this right."

He gave particular praise to St. Catharines MPP Jim Bradley for constantly and continually pushing for Niagara GO.

"All of the work the region has done has helped to enforce the process," he said.

"We will deliver on a massive win for Niagara region."

The announcement was a proud moment for Regional Chairman Alan Caslin.

"Congratulations Niagara, we've finally done it," he told the crowd of supporters.

He outlined the hard work taken on by local, provincial and federal leaders, as well as staff, to make the GO dream a reality and credited all involved for their efforts.

"Regional council has been behind this project for years and made sound

decisions to invest the resources needed to develop a strong business case," Caslin said.

Niagara presented the plan for expansion with a business plan for the expansion in April 2015.

That plan recommended area trains connect to the James Street North GO station in Hamilton for transfer to the Lakeshore West line. That will instead take place through the Confederation station in Hamilton.

"Strengthening our connection

to and from the GTHA (Greater Toronto Hamilton Area) enhances our ability to attract new people to Niagara, create new opportunities for job creation and business expansion," Caslin said. He estimated GO will provide an annual economic impact of about \$185 million to the region.

"When you think about students, when you think about commuters going back and forth to work, when you think about tourists coming down to Niagara, all of this is now

possible with the service that's going to be available to them on a daily basis," he said. "The impact to Niagara is going to be huge."

Tuesday's announcement emphasizes "the power of speaking with one voice," he said, adding it shows what a united Niagara can accomplish.

"Two years ago we weren't even on the radar of Metrolinx and GO."

Continued on next page

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# LOCAL NEWS

## Province announces rail service expansion into region by 2021

### From previous page

Caslin felt the timeline provided by the province follows logical steps given the work taking place in Hamilton.

He was satisfied with a commitment from Del Duca that the process will be expedited if possible and pleased that upgrades to existing stations will begin next year.

Niagara has been preparing

for the arrival of GO and working to ensure inter-municipal transit is available prior to the service's arrival.

"We will be ready," he said, adding transit will be up and running not only in the region's three largest cities, but also in its "extended communities."

Caslin said the local GO working group will continue to

maintain momentum on the file "until the first train rolls down the tracks" to ensure the region is on the same page as Metrolinx and the province throughout implementation of the service.

St. Catharines Mayor Walter Szendzik said the GO commitment, regardless of the timeline, is one that was not in place 24 hours ago.

"The province has set aside full funding to get it from Grimsby to Niagara Falls, so it can't disappear," he said. "We now know that we have the certainty in funding, the certainty in the timeline they've provided, but we also have a better understanding now of what the construction schedule looks like."

Szendzik suspects the time-

line will prompt Niagara's municipalities to ensure that if the dates can be accelerated, local infrastructure is in place to immediately support the service.

That includes having an inter-municipal transit system up and running, Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati said, and that achievement is on the horizon.

"We're going to be ready to go. We're going to be ready really soon," he said of the transit working group with representation from Welland, Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, as well as the Region. "We want to merge this into one seamless regionally-integrated transit system — that's the goal that we're moving toward. We're doing that pretty expeditiously."

Diodati called the GO announcement historic for Niagara.

An approval by the treasury board of provincial dollars is "huge," he said. "That's not just policking, that's committed dollars."

He felt the province was "playing it safe with their dates" for implementing the

service, but is hopeful government will "under promise and over deliver."

"It's my hope and expectation we'll do all we can do to move that date forward to have GO service sooner rather than later."

Diodati said the opening of a new high-speed rail station in Niagara Falls, N.Y., in July should create a "heightened sense of interest" to get the expansion completed as soon as possible.

"We're going to have a connection between Toronto and New York City and it just so happens to go through Niagara."

The mayor said he hoped to learn more about why the service was unable to immediately begin despite summer weekend GO service already being offered in Niagara.

Metrolinx chief operating officer Greg Percy said "CN provides 'operating windows' to allow for that summer service, but continued negotiations are needed in order to get weekday service underway. Those windows ensure no interruption to CN's freight operation schedule.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## Hey, these activities are free and in Niagara. Really.

**CHERYL CLOCK**  
Postmedia Network

These days the idea of getting

something for free is often met with suspicion.

This summer put your skepticism aside for a moment and con-

sider the wealth of no-cost events and activities offered across Niagara. Think music, fireworks, movies, even a campfire with

song and marshmallows. Your only cost is the gas to get there – and hotdogs for the fire.

In just about every corner of the region, there is free live music throughout July and August. Pretty much the only requirements are a lawn chair or blanket to sit on, and time to spend outdoors.

In St. Catharines, local musicians perform in Montebello Park Wednesday nights into July, and Music in the Square returns Saturdays at Market Square.

Niagara Falls offers several free concert series – Coca-Cola concerts at the Queen Victoria stage, Thursday Blues in the Park and Twilight Tuesdays at Fire-

man's Park – and concerts on a more intimate scale at Niagara Falls History Museum.

There's always the sounds of big bands, Dixie and blues at Queenston Heights Park Sunday afternoons, and at the Foot-hill bandshell on Thursday nights. The Thorold Reed Concert Band again offers its summer pop series at Beaverdams Park on Wednesday nights.

Niagara has its share of concert bands, and although they've been around for more than a century, their relevance is still intricately connected to the community.

*Continued on next page*



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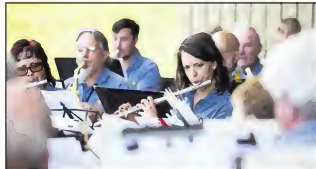
Lance Anderson was named Piano/Keyboard Awards of the Year at the 17th annual Maple Blues Awards Gala in Toronto in 2014 and has been nominated for this award 8 times in the Last 12 years. Lance is a successful producer, with recording credits such as Leahy (double Juno, Platinum Virgin Music recording artist) and a number of recent recordings under his own "Make it Real" Records.

This production will recreate the magic of the award winning 1970's Mad Dog's & Englishmen tour, album and movie.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## Hey, these activities are free and in Niagara. Really.

### From previous page

"Where else do you get to go to a concert that you don't have to pay to see, and just sit and enjoy the music," says Lois Dix, who conducts both the Niagara Falls Concert Band and the Lincoln and Welland Ambassadors Swing Band.

Musicians are all volunteers, although sometimes the conductors are paid.

"Music is a way of life for many musicians," she says. "They play for the love of playing."

Repetitive can span the decades, from big band medleys to *Born to be Wild*, a tribute to Elton John to the dance medley from *Shrek*.

Community concert bands give opportunity to amateur musicians and quality entertainment to the community, Dix says.

Live bands make music real, espe-

cially to kids, says Rhonda Gletcher, president of the Thorold Reed Concert Band and bass clarinetist.

"It shows them that there's actually people behind the music," she says. Picnic blankets and children dancing to big band tunes cultivates an unplugged and uncomplicated atmosphere that many families need to balance the business of life.

It's about community. And giving back, says David Fleming, president of the Lincoln Concert Band, and baritone player.

Like other bands, they also visit long-term care facilities and perform for residents.

"We love seeing people smile," he says.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## Karate offered for special needs students

**BERND FRANKE**  
Postmedia Network

Steffanie Hancharyk doesn't believe a special need should stop someone from pursuing a passion for martial arts.

Beginning this Saturday the martial arts instructor from St. Catharines will start sharing her knowledge in order to make that happen. Hancharyk intends to teach four karate sessions - four to six years of age, 11-1:45 a.m.; seven to 11, 11:45-12:30 p.m.; 13 and older, 12:30-1:30 p.m.; wheelchair, 1:30-2:30 p.m. - at Welland Martial Centre on Division Street.

Unlike schools, where many with developmental and physical difficulties are integrated into regular classrooms, her classes won't include regular students. "That would be a disservice to both classes," said Hancharyk, pointing out the regular students could become impa-

tient with the one-on-one instruction that will be necessary while the special needs students could feel intimidated by the advanced skills of others.

Goal of a program that features little, if any, contact is to introduce people with special needs to an activity that they can enjoy doing.

"The purpose is not self-defence. It's giving them something to do that can engage them and keeps them excited," she said.

Martial arts is good at building self-esteem as well as promoting fitness. Hancharyk said throughout history, in its various forms in different parts of the world, martial arts has been regarded as a "secret knowledge that's difficult to learn."

Hancharyk, a black belt since 2003, suggested untapping that knowledge is a big part of the appeal of belonging to a club or studio.



BERND FRANKE/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Martial arts instructor Steffanie Hancharyk intends to teach karate to people with special needs starting this Saturday in Welland.

"The secret is in the training." Another attraction that martial arts has for people is an "element of danger."

"There's a little bit of a risk. That's exciting," she said.

At her Welland classes, Hancharyk, who has taught special needs for the past two years, expects to be assisted by Brock recreation and leisure students. She said one-on-one instruction is going to

be necessary in some cases.

"It's very individual but you're with a group doing it," Hancharyk said. "Everything is adaptable."

Cost for the eight-week program is \$125, but people can check it out before making a commitment.

"First, I want to engage

them, then I can teach them," she said. "You have to get people to trust."

More information is available by e-mailing Hancharyk at [experiencepa@gmail.com](mailto:experiencepa@gmail.com). People can also call 905-401-4239 and ask for Karen.

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St. Catharines

# DSBN will not change new name of Fenwick school

From Page 3

The name is for an expanded school at the Farr site in Fenwick. It will serve the consolidation of the current kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grade 4 to Grade 8 schools. Construction is about to begin. In a PowerPoint presentation showing historic maps, Ker said there is only one local reference to Wellington Heights and no evidence the British government owned 900 acres of land to build a fortress in eastern Pelham, near current site of Lookout Point golf course.

Even that site, Ker said, is outside the area served by Farr and Pelham Centre schools.

The location of E.W. Farr school, he said, is below "any heights" Fenwick is in a flat area of western Pelham.

The Duke of Wellington, overall commander of the British Army following the War of 1812, played no role in the area of the British Army conflict. He considered the war "unwinnable" and a distraction

to his European struggle with Napoleon, Ker said.

Later, Wellington was a leader of the conservative faction in the British parliament by extending the vote to more people, removing restrictions on Catholics and he had an anti-Semitic attitude.

Board chair Dale Robinson in an interview after the meeting said Ker's presentation was self-referenced.

However, the Thorold Pelham trustee said trustees wanted to back their local committee, and especially the students on it, by sticking with the board's policy.

"It is part of the democratic process," she said just as the Fenwick group's appeal to Toronto would be.

E.W. Farr, a former principal and local educator in Pelham in the first half of the 20th century, will still be honoured in the school, Robinson said. His name will be on the larger school's new library and learning centre.

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## IN BRIEF

## Loan request approved for Pelham multi-use centre

Niagara Region has endorsed Pelham's \$36.2 million loan for its new multi-use community centre.

Approval was sought by the town to authorize debenture of the full estimated cost of the project, which includes a twin-pad arena with

1,000 seats, adaptable community spaces, a double gymnasium and indoor walking track.

Regional council gave its approval Thursday night. Pelham intends to use other funding sources to lessen the amount that needs to be borrowed, but requested the full debenture

to lock in low interest rates should additional dollars be needed. Mayor Dave Augustyn told the Region's corporate services committee, which gave its approval last week.

The anticipated cost breakdown includes a \$3.1-million debenture in 2016 and a \$12.1-million

debenture in 2017 — the latter of which is expected to be recouped, including interest, through development charges, Augustyn said.

Remaining funds will be paid for through \$12 million from the sale of land owned by the town and \$3 million in fundraising.

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